Chief Executives Board for Coordination

26 April 2017

Conclusions of the High-level Committee on Management at its thirty-third session

(Ministry of Agriculture, Budapest, 30 and 31 March 2017)

Contents

		Page
	Executive summary	2
I.	Introduction	5
	A. High-level Committee on Management strategic plan 2017-2020	5
	B. New service delivery approaches: simplification, decentralization and flexibility	6
	1. Thematic discussion on global service centres	6
	2. Project proposal for the joint provision of human resources services	11
	C. Global United Nations system workforce and transformative leadership	12
	1. Duty of care in high-risk environments: terms of reference and programme of work	12
	2. Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security on the current security environment for United Nations personnel	13
	3. United Nations system leadership model	15
	4. Outcome of the eighty-fourth session of the International Civil Service Commission and the Human Resources Network strategic workplan	17
	D. Innovation, experimentation, transparency and accountability	20
	1. Adoption of a United Nations common documentation standard	20
	2. Common definitions of fraud and presumptive fraud	22
Annexes		
I.	List of participants	25
II.	Checklist of documents	29

17-09602 (E) 220617

Please recycle

Executive summary

The thirty-third session of the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) was co-hosted in Budapest on 30 and 31 March 2017 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Children's Fund. The meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chair of the High-level Committee on Management, Jan Beagle, of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

The session focused on developing innovative business models as key enablers of the integrated approaches required by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and contributing to the review of the United Nations development system being conducted by the Deputy Secretary-General.

Major decisions taken

Following a careful review of the mandates included in the resolution of the General Assembly on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the Committee adopted its strategic plan 2017-2020 and the corresponding results framework, subject to further adjustments, particularly in the light of any additional direction that might be provided by the Secretary-General and the outcome of the review of the United Nations development system.

In 2016, the General Assembly asked CEB to develop a single agreed definition, across the United Nations system, of what constituted fraud, as well as cases of suspected or presumptive fraud. This was considered essential in order to develop effective counter-fraud policies to ensure the compatibility and comparability of related data across entities and to improve overall transparency. In Budapest, the Committee adopted common definitions of fraud and presumptive fraud, aligned to the Secretariat's definitions as included in the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework presented by the Secretary-General last year, and which CEB can now endorse.

New technologies open entirely new horizons to reshape the operational models of United Nations organizations. We also believe that adopting internationally recognized standards, such as the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the International Aid Transparency Initiative, adds to the transparency and credibility of the United Nations system. Informed by these principles, the Committee adopted a United Nations common documentation standard based on Extensible Markup Language (XML). The common documentation standard represents a strategic achievement. Its adoption will lead to considerable efficiencies in document management processes, and it will preserve the unity of intent across the United Nations system in the critical domain of information and knowledge management. This is an important step towards the digital United Nations system for which the Secretary-General advocates.

Member States are unanimously calling for a higher degree of integration, coordination, accountability and transparency in the United Nations system. The operational infrastructure and the business models of organizations are key enablers in the pursuit of the integrated approach for which the 2030 Agenda calls. The choice of Budapest as the venue of the Committee session was made in order to foster a discussion aimed at further developing organizations' collective knowledge and analysis of the United Nations system's experience in global service centres, to start building the basis for a leap forward in this area.

The Committee is now leading the thinking and discussions towards the further consolidation and streamlining of service delivery. Towards this objective, the Committee decided to: (a) consolidate a summary of different approaches and best practices in global service delivery, including governance and risk management options; (b) develop an inventory of needs for operational services and an availability and capacity assessment of potential service providers; (c) conduct a review of cost recovery, cost sharing and pricing models, per service or service line; (d) propose approaches to maintaining and sharing key performance indicators for comparability among organizations and transparency with stakeholders; (e) consolidate a list of service level agreements with internal and external customers, for comparability among organizations; and (f) propose approaches to inter-agency learning and the sharing of best practices between service centres. The Committee also encouraged organizations to take initiatives towards agency-to-agency service provision.

The Committee laid the first brick for the joint provision of selected human resources services by deciding to establish a joint human resources facility for job classification and reference checking — a major bottleneck to speedy and efficient recruitment.

Success in streamlining and integrating business operations is still contingent on strong leadership at all levels, including the Resident Coordinators and the United Nations country team. Together with the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Development Group, the High-level Committee on Management has finalized and is now ready to implement (after CEB endorsement) a new system-wide leadership framework, which also aims to enhance leadership accountability for collective results at the country level.

The Committee aims to make clear progress towards achieving diversity, including gender parity, in particular in senior leadership positions. We think increased staff diversity with regard to gender, nationality, age and culture is a matter of equity and also a programmatic enabler. We are therefore ready to help the Secretary-General make his forthcoming gender parity strategy a reality across the entire United Nations system.

The Committee reaffirmed CEB common principle 11: "The organizations of the United Nations system will preserve and foster the health and well-being as well as safety and security of their staff — while remaining committed to stay and respond to the ever-increasing demand for their services, despite the often deteriorating conditions in which those services are being delivered", and adopted a comprehensive programme of work to improve duty of care for United Nations system personnel in high-risk duty stations.

The Committee is designing and putting in place the building blocks necessary to achieve the goal of establishing a "global United Nations system workforce", including mechanisms to support system-wide mobility and the cross-fertilization of skills and to amalgamate specializations, expertise and training opportunities across the entire system. In pursuing this goal, the Committee committed to actively engage in the second phase of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) comprehensive compensation review — focusing on the conditions for locally recruited staff categories — with the aim of developing adequate, flexible tools that allow organizations to better and more flexibly engage local talent, and to respond in an agile and cost-effective way to their specific challenges in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Finally, the Committee took note of the outcome of the current round of place-to-place cost-of-living surveys and its expected negative impact on a large number of European duty stations. The Committee requested that the implementation of the survey results be carefully planned and prepared, in particular through appropriate communication by ICSC well in advance of an implementation date, and that such implementation should be phased in a gradual manner in order to mitigate negative impacts on staff.

I. Introduction

1. The thirty-third session of the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) was co-hosted in Budapest on 30 and 31 March 2017 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chair of the High-level Committee on Management, the Deputy Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Jan Beagle.

2. The agenda adopted by the Committee is reflected in the table of contents. The complete list of participants is provided in annex I. The checklist of documents is in annex II. All documents related to the session are available on the website of the CEB (www.unsceb.org/content/march-2017).

3. In her opening remarks, the Committee Vice-Chair informed participants that the Committee Chair, Irina Bokova, would have very much liked to be in Budapest, but there had been an unfortunate coincidence of dates as she had to participate in the ministerial forum of the Group of Seven in Florence, Italy, on 30 and 31 March, which was the first-ever meeting of the Group of Seven dedicated to cultural heritage. That meeting also came as a direct follow-up to the adoption by Security Council on 24 March 2017 of the historic resolution 2347 (2017) on the protection of heritage in situations of conflict. The Chair's participation in the meeting of the Group of Seven in Florence was part of the global movement spearheaded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to bring together partners at the highest levels to harness the potential of heritage as a force for peace, security and reconciliation.

A. High-level Committee on Management strategic plan 2017-2020

4. The approval by the High-level Committee on Management and the subsequent endorsement by CEB at their fall 2016 sessions of the Committee's strategic plan 2017-2020 were made with the provision that both the plan and the attached results framework would be further reviewed for any adjustments in the second quarter of 2017, on the basis of the intergovernmental mandates that would be provided by the new quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolution and of the vision for management reform that might be formulated by the new Secretary-General. The Committee reviewed the strategic plan and results framework for any adjustments.

5. The Committee Secretary summarized the adjustments made to the outcomes, outputs and activities in the results framework since the October 2016 session. Output C.7, "A UN system Gender Parity Strategy is developed and adopted", was added in anticipation of the finalization of the gender parity strategy by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. As the strategy was still being developed, the Committee postponed this discussion until more information on its status and planned next steps became available.

6. Upon suggestion by the Information and Communications Technology Network, activity F.3.b, "Review and propose refinements and enhancements to Topics 1 and 5 of the CEB-endorsed UN System Internal Coordination Plan on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime", had also been added. There was a broad consensus that cybersecurity was a critical topic for the United Nations system, and a number of speakers noted that it was important to integrate physical security and cybersecurity, as doing so would enable the system to learn from lessons from

physical security. In this context, reference was made to the Joint Inspection Unit report on safety and security which made it clear that no organization could address the topic properly alone. Hence, collaboration in this area was critical and the Committee was the right place for it to be taken forward.

7. During the discussion, the implications of new European Union regulations on transparency were brought to the attention of the Committee in reference to priority 5 on data and transparency of the strategic plan. Organizations would need to work collectively, in collaboration with the Legal Network, on ways to address new demands for protection of data and privacy.

8. Based on the shared assessment of its members, the Committee noted that all mandates on operational subjects listed in the new quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolution had already been included among the strategic plan's priorities and related activities. The Committee also noted that the strategic plan would have to be adjusted to integrate any action towards the changes in the United Nations development system that would eventually be agreed, following the completion of the review led by the Deputy Secretary-General.

9. The Committee supported the adoption of the strategic plan 2017-2020 with the understanding that it was a living document that would be reviewed continuously to respond to the demands on the Committee, as the system moved forward in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and recognizing that emerging priorities from the Secretary-General in the area of management would need to be given priority attention.

10. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Confirmed its readiness to contribute its input and perspectives in the review of the United Nations development system led by the Deputy Secretary-General, in the forms and modalities that the Deputy Secretary-General would indicate;**

(b) **Following a careful review of the mandates included in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolution adopted in late 2016, adopted the High-Level Committee on Management strategic plan 2017-2020 and the corresponding revised results framework, as outlined in document CEB/2016/HLCM/15/Add.1/Rev.1, subject to further adjustments, particularly in the light of any additional direction that might be provided by the Secretary-General, and of the outcome of the review of the United Nations development system;**

(c) **Noted that the strategic plan and the results framework would remain living documents, and that the latter would be populated and adjusted in the course of the next months, following a new round of consultations to be conducted by the CEB Secretariat.**

B. New service delivery approaches: simplification, decentralization and flexibility

1. Thematic discussion on global service centres

11. The Vice-Chair introduced this item by recalling the strong and unanimous call that Member States made at the last Economic and Social Council operational activities segment on 28 February and 1 March for a higher degree of integration, coordination, accountability and transparency in the United Nations system. She further noted that this was as true on the operational side as on the programmatic side — the operational infrastructure and the business models of organizations were

key enablers in the pursuit of the integrated approach for which the 2030 Agenda calls.

12. The Vice-Chair noted that, in the past few years, the operational functions of United Nations system organizations had increasingly relied on inter-agency collaboration, replication of best practices and capitalizing on economies of scale. Important achievements had brought measurable results and reductions in transaction costs, but acceleration and mainstreaming was needed.

13. The purpose of this thematic discussion was to further develop organizations' collective knowledge and analysis of the United Nations system's experience in global service centres, to start building the basis for a leap forward in this area.

14. The Committee heard presentations from organizations that have already established global service centres — FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The discussion, which also hosted a presentation by the Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit on his report on "The role of service centres in redesigning administrative service delivery", was arranged in a share and compare format, based on a template that covered the following preselected topics: business models and governance; key performance indicators; customer service approaches; operational arrangements; operational challenges and solutions; opportunities and challenges for joint provision of services with or to other United Nations organizations; and possible pricing models applicable for the provision of services to other clients.

Presentation of the Joint Inspection Unit

15. The Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit focused his briefing on the different models for service provision adopted by United Nations system organizations. According to his findings, there were similar characteristics between service centres in that they all provided large-scale operational functions and supported both the headquarters and the field. The report also indicated that the primary driver for establishing service centres has been cost savings, and that these have been realized. However, quality of service and streamlining of processes were also drivers for some organizations, and this has been achieved through business process re-engineering. A key finding was that the establishment of service centres required considerable time, planning, analysis and investment, suggesting that such endeavours should only be undertaken after careful consideration. The next step for the Joint Inspection Unit was to look at inter-agency shared service opportunities, and this work would commence during 2017.

Business models and governance

16. The Committee received presentations from FAO on its centre in Budapest and the Secretariat on its plans for global service delivery. UNCHR acted as a discussant to compare their approach to those of the presenters. FAO presented a model that included significant business process re-engineering that went together with the establishment of the centre. The approach looked at both efficiency gains along with cost savings. The Secretariat presented a case where the introduction of a new enterprise resource planning system was driving change and where there was a push towards drastically reducing the number of entities carrying out back-office functions. The Secretariat was expected to present a detailed proposal to the General Assembly in the fall of 2017. UNHCR, in their role as discussant, in contrast, presented a case where management of operational functions was based in Geneva and existing processes were largely maintained by having Budapest and

Copenhagen as "out-posted" headquarters. The move to Budapest was seen as a cost-saving exercise that did not focus on process re-engineering.

17. From the presentations and the subsequent discussion it was noted that the differences in approaches were larger than some had expected. However, numerous similarities also emerged, in line with the presentation by the Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit, showing that the services provided, or planned to be provided, were similar between the organizations, regardless of model. In the case of centres that had been in place for a longer period, such as UNHCR and IOM, Committee members were cautioned against the growth that tended to take place in low-cost locations. Decisions to add units not linked to the original purpose of the centre could lead to business fragmentation at the location of the centre, which might in turn result in less coherence in the organization.

Key performance indicators

18. The Committee received a presentation by UNICEF on their approach to key performance indicators. The day before the meeting, interested Committee members were also invited to a tour of the UNICEF centre in Budapest, where an introduction to their indicators was given. The presentation highlighted a strong focus on establishing clear targets, mostly related to time for completing transactions. The management team reviewed performance against these targets on a weekly basis. It was explained that targets for emergency countries were set more aggressively, in some areas, with shorter time frames than non-emergency countries. Indicators were monitored through daily data collection using a case management tool. Weekly review meetings were held to discuss problem areas identified by the data produced. After analysing causes, corrective action, if necessary, was decided upon. UNDP, acting as the discussant, indicated their use of a similar approach, with a strong focus on regular monitoring of key performance indicators, and with the enterprise resource planning system playing a key role in data collection. In many cases, the indicators were similar or the same.

19. The importance of transparency in key performance indicators and their monitoring was seen as a priority both by the presenters and in the subsequent discussion. It was generally agreed that strong indicators and sound data collection and monitoring systems were essential to provision of services to other organizations. In this respect, the Committee noted that key performance indicators should be shared and published.

Customer service approaches

20. The Committee received a presentation by UNHCR regarding their approach in Budapest and in Copenhagen. The centre in Budapest had been in place for several years already and, when it was established, it was done primarily for cost-saving purposes, with savings primarily being generated by moving to a cheaper duty station. UNHCR had decided on a model where reporting lines still went to operational entities in Geneva rather than to managers at the centre. Hence, the customer service approach continued to lie under the responsibility of each operational division. For UNHCR, improving customer service remained at that moment within the structure of results-based management in the organization, which was different from key performance indicator monitoring for back-office processes. Furthermore, the nature of the approach of out-posted headquarters rather than outsourcing could require a different modality when it came to customer service focus, which in some cases included client satisfaction surveys. UNHCR had just completed a review of its headquarters functions, and adjustments were expected as part of the follow-up.

21. Similarly, IOM, acting as the discussant, noted that recently established centres were considerably different from older ones. When IOM established its centres in Manila and Panama, customer service approaches and detailed key performance indicator development and monitoring were not prioritized, as cost savings was the immediate driver. Hence, this had not been a regular focus of the management of the centres. In the discussion that followed, the Committee agreed with the presenter and discussant that a strong customer service approach along with strong key performance indicators and data collection were a precondition for successful service provision to others. Approaches to customer service could also include surveys and the involvement of service recipients in governance mechanisms to ensure transparency and satisfaction with management. However, no clear consensus emerged on whether inclusion in the governance structure would be necessary for good customer service.

Operational arrangements

22. The Committee received a presentation by UNDP which focused primarily on cost recovery and pricing models. UNDP outlined four possible methods of pricing for services: fee and payment against invoices; transactions charged and reported back through an inter-funding accounting system; subscription fees against a centre of excellence; and joint investment and subsequent subscription. All of these approaches were presented as possible ways to manage the financing of service provision to others. The preferred model for potentially extending services to others was not indicated, but mention was made of the existing global price list, which was used in the field for ad hoc service provision. WHO, in its role as discussant, stated that their model was 100 per cent funded from the core budget of the organization and did not operate on a cost-recovery basis. In relation to providing services to UNAIDS, an additional model was introduced, that of cost sharing based on the number of staff. The latter represented an unsophisticated, yet very simple, approach to cost sharing.

23. In the subsequent discussion, a fifth financing model was proposed, which would be based on increasing the capacity of a centre to handle new transactions based on estimated volume. The organization to receive services would then pay for the expansion and continued management and cost of this increase in capacity.

24. Finally, the Committee received briefings from UNAIDS, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as organizations that were receiving services, and from UNFPA and UNESCO as organizations looking for further options for additional/increased outsourcing of back-office functions. These organizations were looking for optimized programme delivery with high-quality services that were cost-effective. The importance of modern enterprise resource planning systems and their ability to communicate with each other, while not necessarily being interoperable, was seen as a key precondition for such collaboration. It was noted that existing, organization-specific service centres had been designed to specifically meet the needs of the parent organization in the first instance, with excess capacity being offered to sister organizations. This relationship and construct differed from the model of a service centre designed to meet the needs of a number of organizations equally. A clearly defined client's role and influence in the governance as a fully fledged partner to the service provider was consequently raised as a key issue. The presenters agreed that good communication between provider and recipient of services was critical, and that there needed to be a clear and effective dispute resolution mechanism. A common perception was that of service providers prioritizing services for their organization, and therefore tracking of key performance indicators was needed to ensure

transparency. In the subsequent discussion it was agreed that a clear definition of roles and responsibilities of both the service provider and the client was important in order to also be able to accurately assess the causes of inefficiencies and delays, when they arose.

25. In the general discussion on how to move forward, the Committee agreed that organizations should be asked to develop and make accessible to other United Nations entities a list of the services that they could provide for others, the key performance indicators that they used and their preferred cost recovery/pricing model. Organizations looking to outsource services would then have a clear picture of existing possibilities and the approaches used by the different existing centres. Such a list could also form the basis of system-wide and bilateral discussions on moving towards joint service provision.

26. Throughout the presentations and discussion, some challenges emerged. There was a consensus that change management and communication of change must be carefully planned and implemented. Working through global service centres was different from business as usual, and investment in sustained change management was crucial for success. There was a need for culture change along with process change. It was also noted that process and culture change within organizations had successfully led to large efficiency gains even without moving to a service centre approach.

27. It was agreed that, moving forward, predictable, transparent and disaggregated pricing models or alternative approaches to compare costs of services provided would have to be determined. There was also a general consensus on the fact that key performance indicator monitoring and customer service approaches might, in some cases, need to be improved and, in these cases, focus needed to be on adopting a model for external service provision in addition to one for internal support only.

28. Many noted that finding and retaining staff represented a challenge, in different degrees, depending on the duty station. Recruiting staff that were familiar with how United Nations system organizations operated was often difficult. Some organizations also mentioned the possible need for more flexible contract modalities for service centres. In this respect, it was agreed that the upcoming review of national staff contracts by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) might be useful.

29. On the "softer" side of challenges, the importance of making staff feel a part of a whole was emphasized. In that context, developing a shared ownership of the organizational mandates was difficult when work was carried out in different locations. Similarly, some service centres did not allow for the "coffee break" approach to solving problems, where issues could be addressed informally and where ownership was created from personal relationships. In one case, creating a conference centre as a part of the service centre was a way to bring staff from the organization as a whole into contact with service centre staff.

30. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Expressed appreciation to the Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit and to member organizations for their presentations;**

(b) **Requested the CEB secretariat to form a task force to:**

(i) **Take stock of the information and the data gathered to date on the experiences of member organizations with respect to the evolution of their service delivery models;**

(ii) **Consolidate a summary of different approaches and best practices in global service delivery, including governance and risk-management**

options, building on existing Committee documents and the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on global service centres;

(iii) Develop an inventory of needs for operational services and an availability and capacity assessment of potential service providers;

(iv) Conduct a review of cost recovery, cost sharing and pricing models, per service or service line;

(v) Propose approaches to maintaining and sharing key performance indicators for comparability among organizations and transparency with stakeholders;

(vi) Consolidate a list of service level agreements with internal and external customers, for comparability among organizations;

(vii) Propose approaches to inter-agency learning and sharing of best practices between service centres;

(viii) Prepare a paper for the second quarter 2018 session on the above;

(c) Requested the Finance and Budget Network to develop proposals for United Nations standards for inter-agency funding and drawdown, with the aim to provide a clearing mechanism for services provided across entities;

(d) Encouraged organizations to take initiatives towards agency-to-agency service provision.

2. Project proposal for the joint provision of human resources services

31. The Vice-Chair recalled that the Human Resources Network had briefed the Committee about an initiative to establish a joint human resources facility for job classification and reference checking. This initiative formed part of the new strategic plan.

32. The Co-Chair of the Human Resources Network introduced the topic, reporting back on discussions at the recent Network meeting. A number of agencies were looking into joint service delivery for one or both of the suggested services, while others pointed out that the desired qualitative benefits would best be achieved by better process integration into other human resources processes within the organizations. There was overwhelming support for better information-sharing among agencies. The Network agreed that a joint facility should be driven by interested organizations in a non-prescriptive manner, while more generally fostering collaborations among all Network members in these areas, regardless of the use of a joint service delivery facility.

33. The external consultant contracted by the Human Resources Network subsequently presented her business case and feasibility study for the project. She highlighted that — from a financial perspective alone — only the collaboration in job classification would yield savings for a number of agencies. No such savings were to be expected in reference checking. However, a number of qualitative benefits and more thorough risk management would represent a positive impact of the initiative. She confirmed that a joint facility should be able to offer job classification services at a lower or same cost as that currently offered by specialized consultants. Most organizations were interested in further collaboration in process streamlining and better information-sharing, regardless of their immediate interest in joint service delivery. She analysed several options, ranging from a purely virtual centre to the creation of a new centre independent of current locations. Furthermore, she recommended specific governance arrangements, with the involvement of participating organizations and the CEB/High-level Committee on Management.

34. In the subsequent discussion, the representative of the Legal Network explained that joint information-sharing on disciplinary cases was feasible, as long as it contained only confirmed findings or credible allegations. Further work was needed in this regard. A number of organizations indicated a preference for a physical centre in a location and setting that made use of existing structures and facilities. UNHCR declared their interest to join a joint facility for reference checking, but they were still undecided about job classification. The World Tourism Organization indicated that for small agencies a fee-per-use modality was critical in any decision to join. UNFPA, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and WHO also indicated a firm interest in joining such a facility for both services. UNDP confirmed the willingness of United Nations Volunteers to host such an initiative, indicating that they saw large potential in it. IOM indicated their interest in further collaboration, highlighting, however, that cost was a critical decision criterion.

35. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Took note, with appreciation, of the business case and feasibility study submitted by the Human Resources Network (CEB/2017/HLCM/4). The Committee noted that the predominant drivers for the initiative were qualitative improvements and risk reduction, while a clear financial business case could only be demonstrated for job classification services. The Committee also highlighted that a number of qualitative benefits could be attained through other initiatives such as process streamlining and enhanced information-sharing, and encouraged the Network to pursue these initiatives;**

(b) **Endorsed the recommendations to proceed with the joint facility project, indicating its preference to start with the second option — to co-locate the joint facility with existing activities, as presented in the document. The Committee endorsed the other recommendations contained in the report, in particular with regard to an inclusive project governance;**

(c) **Noted that, to date, only one agency had indicated their interest in hosting such an initiative (UNDP/United Nations Volunteers), and requested interested agencies, including UNDP, to form a working group to prepare concrete steps towards implementation, including location selection, staffing modalities and a detailed pricing model;**

(d) **Requested this working group to inform the Committee, through the Human Resources Network, about a detailed implementation plan and provide regular progress updates on this Committee initiative;**

(e) **Requested the Human Resources Network to initiate preparatory work for the establishment of a reference checking database, and to report back on its progress at the next Committee meeting.**

C. Global United Nations system workforce and transformative leadership

1. Duty of care in high-risk environments: terms of reference and programme of work

36. The Vice-Chair introduced this item stressing that, today more than ever, duty of care for United Nations personnel, particularly but not exclusively in high-risk duty stations, represented a subject that so many organizations were looking at as a key issue. It was part of the new strategic plan, and the activities provided for in the new results framework had been taken forward by a task force under the leadership

of the Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees. The Vice-Chair expressed appreciation to UNHCR and to UNICEF, who was providing secretariat support for the task force.

37. The Chair of the duty of care task force acknowledged the work of Under-Secretary-General Peter Drennan in completion of the original working group's mandate. She presented both a summary of works already under way and the task force's proposed approach, which was summarized as mapping (now complete), planning (currently under way) and implementing (the final phase).

38. The task force comprised broad representation of organizations and inter-agency networks.

39. The mapping of activity had demonstrated that both organizations and networks were actively working on all but two of the priorities identified by the original working group.

40. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security expressed appreciation for the establishment of the task force and for the progress made. He highlighted some of the key issues related to duty of care in various duty stations around the world, particularly those that were very high risk, and noted that the deteriorating conditions for United Nations staff reinforced the absolute relevance of this work, and the need for progress.

41. Members of the Committee expressed strong support for the approach. Two potential areas for further consideration included eventually broadening the focus from high-risk duty stations, and the need to explicitly implement measures for the non-staff workforce. Some members also proposed to further develop this stream of work in order to integrate it into the new CEB collaborative leadership model, as well as into considerations on duty of care for partners, particularly with respect to potential insurance arrangements for malicious acts and other types of coverage, where the United Nations system certainly had the scale to obtain particularly advantageous conditions.

42. The Chair advised that there would be a face-to-face meeting of the task force in Geneva in May, and requested that organizations ensure that they were represented by appropriately senior personnel who had decision-making authority.

43. The Vice-Chair highlighted the importance of the initiative, and the expectation that not only individual agencies but also the relevant inter-agency groups (the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, the Human Resources Network, medical doctors, etc.) would continue to support this initiative.

44. **The High-level Committee on Management took note with appreciation of the progress report by the task force, endorsed the programme of work contained therein and approved the terms of reference of the task force.**

2. Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security on the current security environment for United Nations personnel

45. The Vice-Chair recalled that one of the six top priorities of the new strategic plan was to foster organizations' commitment to the safety, security, health and well-being of their staff. She also noted that CEB had strongly reaffirmed this notion in its common principle 11: "The organizations of the United Nations System will preserve and foster the health and well-being as well as safety and security of their staff — while remaining committed to stay and respond to the ever-increasing demand for their services, despite the often deteriorating conditions in which those services are being delivered."

46. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security then briefed the Committee on the current security environment for United Nations personnel, noting that the United Nations was operating in a global security environment that was increasingly dangerous, complex and challenging. At the call of their respective governing bodies, United Nations personnel were delivering United Nations political, humanitarian, peacekeeping and development mandates and programmes in the most challenging parts of the world.

47. A growingly complex combination of threats also presented an increasing pressure on the security capacities of host governments, which, inevitably, transferred greater responsibility to the United Nations. The intensity of the attacks against United Nations premises and official vehicles had increased threefold from 2014 to 2015, and there had been a twofold increase in direct attacks against United Nations peacekeepers serving in high-risk environments. Among the worrying trends were the partnership and intersection between non-state armed groups, violent extremists and criminal groups, the use of Internet and social media in fuelling violence and expanded armed confrontations in high-density urban areas. In emerging conflict zones, the predominance of terrorist attacks using unsophisticated modus operandi was likely to continue, while in complex conflict theatres the innovative use of weapons and sophisticated tactics was expected. Targeting might include United Nations and humanitarian operations and personnel, either deliberately or opportunistically.

48. Regrettably, the security environment was unlikely to improve in the near term. An assessment of the global security environment for the next five years had concluded that armed conflict and violent extremism would continue to shape the future global security landscape.

49. The Under-Secretary-General noted the need to improve the ability of organizations to prepare staff working in high-risk operations, and to foster their resilience after working in those environments. In this respect, the Committee's work on duty of care was critical. He further noted that, when organizations scaled back and moved out international staff, they left national staff behind and relied on them to deliver. Inter-Agency Security Management Network working groups on security arrangements for national staff were acting to help staff and provide them with better tools to support their resilience.

50. The Under-Secretary-General underlined that appropriate mitigation measures should be put in place, and costs associated with them should be explicitly recognized. In this respect, the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and the Finance and Budget Network were working to review different funding models to identify ways forward, including by looking at ways to use technology to alleviate gaps in funding.

51. Noting that the United Nations risk profile had increased dramatically, the Under-Secretary-General stated that United Nations organizations should work towards more refined and consistent management policies and tools in order to be able to assess, context by context, what their tolerance to risk should be, and how to manage it.

52. Finally, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the United Nations system was losing as many people in traffic accidents each year as in terrorist attacks. The Inter-Agency Security Management Network was looking at developing a road safety strategy to prevent deaths.

53. In the ensuing discussion, Committee members noted the direct link between cyberterrorism and business continuity. In this respect, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the Assistant Secretary-General for Information and Communications

Technology was taking the lead on this subject at the Secretariat, and the Department of Safety and Security was working closely with that Office.

54. The representative from the United Nations Medical Directors Working Group noted that prolonged exposure to high-risk environments had a heavy health and psychological impact, and that there was a deep gap existing between medical risk management and security risk management. She stressed the need for organizations to dedicate the necessary attention to this matter, and to comply with existing health support policies and provisions.

55. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) Took note with appreciation of the briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, and reiterated that safety and security and wellness were key components of sustainable business models, as well as collaborative approaches, compliance with regulatory and policy provisions and a culture change that recognized and integrated all such elements;

(b) Took note of the report of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network at its twenty-fifth session.

3. United Nations system leadership model

56. The Vice-Chair recalled that the common principles to guide the United Nations system's support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, endorsed by CEB in April 2016, highlighted the critical importance of transformative leadership across the United Nations system, and that CEB had tasked its high-level committees to develop a shared concept of transformative and collaborative leadership to effectively support the 2030 Agenda. The Deputy Director of the United Nations System Staff College, acting as the lead of the joint High-level Committee on Programmes/High-level Committee on Management task team on leadership, and the co-chairs of the United Nations Development Group working group on leadership, subsequently facilitated a consultative process that brought together a range of complementary expertise and perspectives from across the system. The combined effort culminated in the comprehensive draft United Nations system leadership framework that was before the High-level Committee on Management for its consideration (in parallel with the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Development Group).

57. The draft framework identified eight defining characteristics of United Nations leadership aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; namely, that it was norm-based, principled, inclusive, accountable, multidimensional, transformational, collaborative and self-applied. Systems-thinking, co-creation, focusing on producing impact for the most vulnerable and driving transformational change were four key leadership behaviours that exemplified the new way of working. The framework was intended to be applicable to staff at all levels, functions and duty stations, and to serve as a strategic organizational tool. It complemented the Secretary-General's initiatives promoting cross-pillar collaboration and gender parity.

58. The co-leads stressed that culture change would be central to operationalizing the framework. An "opt-in" approach would be taken, permitting agencies to determine how to internalize it as appropriate to their unique needs. The key drivers of the required change were ownership by senior United Nations leaders; active engagement and involvement by all staff; and aligning structures, systems, policies and processes to the framework to enable the desired behaviours. To promote implementation through "pull factors" (rather than imposing desired behaviours on staff), it was proposed that change agents should be empowered within

organizations to bring the framework to life. It was envisioned that their achievements could be publicly recognized through an online platform to create transparency, reinforce accountability and create incentives for change. The proposal also enumerated a number of potential system-wide interventions to stimulate the alignment of United Nations culture to the framework, which would complement entity-specific road maps.

59. Recognizing that good leadership was hard to define yet central to an organization's performance, the High-level Committee on Management fully supported the leadership characteristics and behaviours articulated in the framework, noting its utility as a tool to promote cultural and organizational change at all staff levels. The Human Resources Network had discussed the framework and its implementation in detail and welcomed it as a helpful guiding framework. While acknowledging the diversity within the United Nations system, members underscored the importance of and value in having a shared vision and common framework towards which to collectively strive. While it was understood that all staff had a role to play in realizing the desired changes, the importance of support for the framework from executive heads and other senior managers was emphasized.

60. Many members looked forward to beginning to operationalize the framework within their organizations and pursuing the accompanying culture change. The bottom-up approach to pulling culture change through entities was welcomed. The Committee also appreciated that the implementation of the framework would be flexible and respect the diversity of United Nations system organizations and their specific needs, while still guiding the entities to harmonize around core values. Organizations choosing to opt in would develop detailed and systematic internal implementation road maps based on their individual business models and in the context of their broader organizational approaches to culture change. Some members expressed interest in having a more fully developed global road map for their reference.

61. A number of members indicated that the proposed leadership framework was well aligned with their existing leadership and/or change strategies and activities. Sharing experiences and best practice among participating entities would be beneficial in order to support effective operationalization and promote coherence. Support was also expressed for proceeding, also on an opt-in basis, with the collaborative system-wide initiatives proposed. Additional opportunities for inter-agency collaboration in leadership development could be identified as implementation progressed.

62. It was suggested that gender sensitivity should also comprise a competency for leaders. Another essential leadership characteristic — the capacity to build trust — was highlighted. Indeed, the leadership framework was seen to be a useful lever for bridging divides and restoring credibility in the context of present challenges. It was observed that leadership also required taking calculated risks, another area in which culture change was required within the United Nations system. Current realities required bold action and ambition, and thus it was suggested that "driving transformational change" could be featured more prominently in the framework. It was also suggested to further emphasize in the framework equality and justice as key causes that the United Nations system served.

63. Accountability to the framework was stressed, and members agreed that appropriate performance assessment and management would be critical to ensure that United Nations system staff were working to embody the framework. More thought was needed on ways to incentivize and reward leadership in order to drive the implementation of the framework. Investing in staff training was seen to be essential to meeting the framework's aspirations.

64. **The High-level Committee on Management supported the adoption of the United Nations system leadership framework, with adjustments resulting from the discussion, for submission to CEB at its April 2017 session.**

4. Outcome of the eighty-fourth session of the International Civil Service Commission and the Human Resources Network strategic workplan

65. The Vice-Chair recalled that, following the implementation of a revised compensation package for internationally recruited staff, the ICSC comprehensive compensation review entered into a second phase, reviewing the conditions for locally recruited staff categories. In order to approach this task holistically, ICSC decided that, before entering into the concrete compensation discussions, a review of the current use of staff categories and the use of the current contractual framework might be useful. The Vice-Chair confirmed that organizations were very much concurring with this approach, since the discussions on readiness to implement the new Sustainable Development Agenda were clearly pointing towards the need for a high-quality, agile workforce that was able to deliver results in an increasingly resource-constrained and less predictable environment, while national and local labour markets were increasingly well developed. Emphasis on national implementation and partnerships was growing, and the discussion was a pertinent one in this context.

66. The Vice-Chair also highlighted that ICSC was currently discussing the outcome and implementation of the recent place-to-place surveys which, while resulting in some increases for mainly the American and Canadian duty stations, were affecting many European headquarter duty stations negatively through significant reductions of net take-home pay. She highlighted that this required careful communication and preparation.

67. Other important topics discussed at the eighty-fourth session of ICSC included the planned review of the pensionable remuneration scales, and a planned review of the hardship classification methodology. The latter was of particular interest and importance to the field-based organizations, given that thorough and realistic duty station classifications were an important underpinning of the compensation system for mobile staff.

68. The Vice-Chair of ICSC confirmed the progress of the discussions on the future use of staff categories, and of the National Professional Officer category in particular, noting that the organizations' call for more flexibility — in particular with regard to the nationality requirement in recruitment and the restrictions to national content of work — were noted and addressed in these discussions.

69. The Vice-Chair of ICSC also provided additional background information on the place-to-place surveys, highlighting that the use for the first time of external data provided by Eurostat had led to some additional comparability challenges in duty stations based in the European Union. Those would be addressed through additional surveys in the coming months. With regard to the results for Geneva, which was likely to result in a reduction in net take-home pay of 6.3 per cent, based on data collected as of the end of March, the Vice-Chair highlighted that the main driving factors were macroeconomic conditions, given that the cost of living had increased in recent years in New York but had decreased in Geneva. In addition, currency exchange rates played a role. He highlighted that the current methodology did not provide for a salary guarantee at the current local level but only for equal purchasing power compared with New York. ICSC had decided to postpone the implementation in Geneva by one month, with subsequent implementation based on the current operational rules for implementation.

70. With regard to the hardship classification review, the ICSC Vice-Chair confirmed that the present review would be handled in a comprehensive manner, taking into account factors such as geographic isolation, health care and suitability for family life, while not discounting safety and security aspects.

71. The Co-Chair of the Human Resources Network confirmed the active involvement of the Network in the ICSC deliberations, highlighting the importance of the hardship classification review as an important underpinning for a mobile workforce. She also stressed the importance of a timely conclusion to the ongoing discussions on the use of staff categories, pointing to the need for more flexibility in using the National Professional Officer category. With regard to the results of the place-to-place surveys, she confirmed that organizations at the ICSC session did not concur with the immediate implementation of the survey results in Geneva, given that more detailed information and communication was needed for staff, that implementation would have to be carefully planned and prepared and that adequate transition and phase-out measures would need to be put in place. Such transition measures should not only be applied in Geneva but in all future duty stations that saw a negative impact following such surveys. She informed the Committee regarding a letter that was addressed to the ICSC Chair by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva on behalf of the Geneva-based organizations, highlighting these points.

72. In the subsequent discussion, a number of organizations raised concerns about the currently planned approach to implementing survey results in Geneva, reiterating the request for more detailed information and explanation, as well as for a carefully planned implementation with adequate transition measures to mitigate impact on existing staff. Geneva-based organizations confirmed their support for the letter issued by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. They voiced serious concerns about the impact on staff morale, in particular given the concurrent implementation of the changes of the compensation review. Some organizations voiced serious concerns regarding the aggravation of the already existing overlap between General Service and Professional salary scales in Geneva. The representative of UNHCR confirmed the continued need for ICSC to address the particular situation in Budapest with regard to post adjustment.

73. Considering the concerns raised by staff and organizations, the representative of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations strongly recommended postponing implementation in order to carefully plan the implementation and to prepare adequate transitional measures, not least to minimize the number of staff seeking legal recourse. He supported the additional survey in order to address the challenges of the first-time use of external data in European Union-based duty stations.

74. On other ICSC-related topics, participants unanimously welcomed the planned review of the hardship classification methodology. They also appreciated progress on the deliberations on the future use of staff categories, including the National Professional Officer category, highlighting that it would be useful if this discussion could lead to adequate conclusions and recommendations in the coming months.

75. The ICSC Vice-Chair confirmed that ICSC would take the concerns of organizations and staff seriously, and that ICSC concurred with the need for adequate, detailed and timely communication to organizations and staff. He also confirmed the willingness of ICSC to be actively engaged in the communication of results.

76. Following this discussion, the Vice-Chair of the High-level Committee on Management recalled that the Human Resources Network had presented a discussion paper on the evolution of the global United Nations system-wide

workforce a year ago. Based on this discussion, the Network was requested to continue its discussions and revert to the Committee with a high-level workplan.

77. The Co-Chair of the Human Resources Network introduced the workplan, highlighting that it had been developed in consideration of the recent quadrennial comprehensive polity review resolution, the management reform agenda of the new Secretary-General and the new strategic plan of the Committee. She highlighted the four priority areas of the workplan: (a) creating an enabling work environment; (b) enhancing United Nations system permeability, inter-agency mobility and cost efficiency; (c) fostering human resources analytics, evidence-based decision-making and the information technology enablement of human resources' and (d) transforming the way in which human resources was managed, in individual organizations and system-wide.

78. The creation of an enabling work environment would include aspects such as duty of care, other psychosocial support, a structured way of measuring and addressing staff engagement and diversity considerations. The Network saw gender parity as an important element, and advocated for its consideration as part of a broader diversity agenda that might help to create enabling work environments. While inter-agency mobility still needed further attention, it could be expected that career paths of the future would include more moves in and out of the United Nations system, and this would need to be considered in the review of contractual arrangements, benefits and policies. The Co-Chair also recalled the Secretary-General's request for further simplification and decentralization.

79. Furthermore, the Co-Chair underscored the increased need to underpin human resources-related decisions with fact-based analysis and cost predictions, thus calling for an approach that rationalized and streamlined routine inter-agency data collection efforts in order to free resources for better analysis of the collected information. Finally, the way in which the human resources function should operate would also have repercussions to the way in which the Human Resources Network operated. It was suggested that inter-agency human resources expert communities be created as a forum for intensified knowledge exchange and a driver for more tangible joint human resources initiatives, supported by a knowledge-sharing platform. Apart from the existing community on performance management, staff engagement and culture, the most interest was expressed in communities for talent outreach and recruitment as well as for human resources analytics and workforce planning.

80. In the subsequent discussion, organizations confirmed their support for the Human Resources Network workplan. One organization highlighted the importance of diversity management in a broad sense, including employment of people with disabilities and a balanced, intergenerational workforce.

81. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Confirmed its continued willingness to actively participate in the discussions of the second phase of the ICSC compensation review in the same consultative manner used in the first phase, in particular through the engagement of its strategic group;**

(b) **Confirmed its expectation that the outcome of this review should lead to adequate, flexible tools that allow organizations to respond in an agile and cost-effective way to their specific challenges in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;**

(c) **Highlighted the need to better and more flexibly engage local talent, and expressed its expectation that this part of the review be concluded in the short term;**

(d) **Welcomed a comprehensive review of the hardship classification methodology, noting that this was an important underpinning for organizations' endeavours to foster geographic mobility of staff;**

(e) **Took note of the outcome of the current round of place-to-place surveys and its expected negative impact on a large number of European duty stations. The Committee requested that the implementation of the survey results be carefully planned and prepared, in particular through appropriate communication by ICSC well in advance of an implementation date, and that such implementation would be phased in a gradual manner in order to mitigate negative impact on staff;**

(f) **Endorsed the Human Resources Network strategic workplan, and requested the Network to revert to the Committee with concrete deliverables, timelines, responsibilities and resource requirements.**

D. Innovation, experimentation, transparency and accountability

1. Adoption of a United Nations common documentation standard

82. The Vice-Chair opened the discussion on the United Nations common documentation standard by noting that the use of information and communications technology as an agent of change and a driver of innovation in business models remained a priority for the Committee. Recalling the successful practice of adopting internationally recognized standards, such as the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the International Aid Transparency Initiative, the Vice-Chair invited the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management to introduce the United Nations semantic interoperability framework.

83. The Under-Secretary-General opened her remarks by commending the dedication and collaborative spirit of the Committee working group on document standards, led by the Committee secretariat, FAO and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. She noted that, through a careful analysis of all document classes, and with the benefit of an advisory board composed of organizations with prior experience in Extensible Markup Language (XML) implementation, such as the European Parliament, the Italian Senate, the House of Representatives of the United States of America and the National Archives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the working group succeeded in creating a unique customization of the Akoma Ntoso XML standard for United Nations documents known as "Akoma Ntoso for the United Nations" (AKN4UN). This customized standard would allow the United Nations system to model its documents in XML in a uniform and intelligible manner, fostering system-wide document interoperability and setting the foundation for future collaboration in this area. The standard also included guidelines for the markup of United Nations normative and parliamentary documents, providing a detailed description of the customized standard and a comprehensive guide to model United Nations documents in all respects, from structure and metadata to semantic content and linked concepts.

84. In addition, the working group also created the first United Nations document ontology, a framework for the description of all components of United Nations documents and the links that could exist among them, allowing for a United Nations-wide ecosystem of machine-readable documents that would prove to be a considerable asset for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and which offered a robust framework for evidence-based policies and accountability. The Under-Secretary-General also noted that implementation of

the standard had the potential, through automation, to substantially reduce the time required to process multilingual documentation, allowing specialists to perform tasks that added value as well as fostering transparency, since it allowed document content to be more easily searchable by stakeholders.

85. Implementation of the standard was now the next step, and the working group recommended to the Committee the adoption of a follow-up project on supporting the adoption and implementation of the United Nations semantic interoperability framework across the United Nations system. This project would seek to provide organizations with the support and coordination necessary to build the capacity needed to put the AKN4UN standard and the guidelines into practice.

86. The Under-Secretary-General also presented the eLUNa product, a web-based suite of language applications developed by the Secretariat based on XML technology. This system, surpassing anything currently available both in terms of performance and ease-of-use, consisted of a family of language tools that included interfaces for translation, revision, editorial work and a search application, as well as a series of applications for document and terminology management. It also included a machine translation function, developed by WIPO. Designed to meet the needs of United Nations organizations, eLUNa was entirely web-based, was simple to use, thereby reducing training time, and was continuously improved based on feedback from users. The editorial interface of eLUNa was the first step in the implementation of the Akoma Ntosa standard.

87. The Under-Secretary-General concluded her remarks by noting that the eLUNa product was currently used globally by 1,200 United Nations translators and in 2016 was used to translate more than 90 million words. As the eLUNa system was made available to other organizations, governance and financing structures were required so that interested organizations could adapt it to their environments. Should interest emerge from other organizations, the Secretariat would prepare a proposal for consideration by the Committee. Such a standardized approach would bring the United Nations system closer to achieving document interoperability in language services as exemplified by the AKN4UN initiative.

88. The Vice-Chair of the Committee then invited the Assistant Director General of FAO to present some of the implemented pilots that showcased the benefits and impact on the organizational efficiency and effectiveness of this new approach. The Assistant Director General noted that, as they implemented the system, the organization was experiencing significant reductions in the time required to prepare documents, especially as a result of the reduced need to manually format documents for presentation. A video presented to the Committee provided the details of six prototype applications developed by FAO that showcased the potential of the Akoma Ntoso standard for the United Nations in the management of governance and normative processes and in the creation of actionable information to support policy and decision-making. Four of the prototypes focused on access to information and two on enhancements to productivity. The prototype services included a portal for access to the FAO food safety standard (Codex Alimentarius); an interactive version of basic texts of FAO, such as its constitution and general rules; and enhancements to access to governing body documents that allowed for seamless contextual navigation between document types. These enhanced services were available in the six official languages.

89. The Vice-Chair noted that, although the working group had only formed in June 2016, through the dedication of the many participants from 16 organizations it was able to produce the standard within a record time. During the discussion, organizations commended the working group and expressed enthusiasm for supporting the adoption of the United Nations semantic interoperability framework

and its corresponding guidelines, with the understanding that they were living documents and would evolve over time to meet the needs of all organizations. There was agreement that this initiative would help realize further efficiencies. WIPO thanked the Committee for recognizing its contribution of the machine translation facility to the eLUNa system, and indicated that this service was still undergoing continuous development. WIPO offered this system to all organizations and was also working on a licence agreement aimed at formalizing the current practice with organizations. Under such a licence agreement, WIPO wished to continue to make this system available to all organizations on a worldwide basis, totally free of charge, subject to compliance with measures aimed at safeguarding its fundamental rights.

90. The Committee thanked the members of the working group and the leadership provided by FAO, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Committee secretariat.

91. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Commended the work of the Committee's working group on document standards to develop a United Nations semantic interoperability framework for normative and parliamentary documents;**

(b) **Noted that the United Nations semantic interoperability framework created the foundation to harmonize machine-access to United Nations system normative and parliamentary documents on the basis of an internationally recognized standard that, while making normative and parliamentary documents more accessible and open to all stakeholders, would contain the system-wide long-term information management costs;**

(c) **Adopted the United Nations semantic interoperability framework for normative and parliamentary documents as outlined in document CEB/2017/HLCM/10/Rev.1 and formed by:**

(i) **Akoma Ntoso as the XML reference standard and in particular its customization into Akoma Ntoso for the United Nations System (AKN4UN), which identified the structural elements of Akoma Ntoso to be used in United Nations system documents;**

(ii) **The United Nations document ontology, which described the formal representation of United Nations documents and their relationships with each other and the entities they portrayed;**

(d) **Adopted the first version of the AKN4UN guidelines for the markup of United Nations normative and parliamentary documents and the United Nations document ontology as the main reference for the implementation of the United Nations semantic interoperability framework;**

(e) **Endorsed the proposal supporting the implementation of the United Nations common documentation standard across the United Nations system, as outlined in annex I to document CEB/2017/HLCM/10/Rev.1.**

2. Common definitions of fraud and presumptive fraud

92. In the context of the consideration by the General Assembly of the fifth progress report of the Secretary-General on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat (A/70/668), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its report on the same subject (A/70/770), as endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 70/255, reiterated its view "that a single agreed definition, across the United Nations system, of what constitutes fraud, as well as cases of suspected or presumptive fraud, is essential in order to develop effective

counter-fraud policies to ensure compatibility and comparability of related data across entities and to improve overall transparency", and reiterated its opinion that CEB "would be best placed to develop such guidance so as to achieve consistent application across all organizations of the United Nations system".

93. A Committee task force on common definitions related to fraud and implementing partners was established in 2016 to carry out the work required to address the mandate of the General Assembly. The Co-Chair of the Finance and Budget Network, on behalf of the co-leaders of the task force, provided an overview of the work of the task force and introduced the common definitions of fraud and presumptive fraud that the task force had agreed on. During his introduction, the Co-Chair emphasized that the objective of the task force had been to develop high-level definitions, as wide in scope as possible, recognizing the different business models of United Nations system organizations, and that further elaboration of the definitions, with more detail and examples as per specific requirements, could be integrated into the policies and/or frameworks of individual organizations, as appropriate.

94. During the discussion, Committee members expressed appreciation for the work of the task force and noted that the resulting definitions represented the best efforts for compatibility across United Nations system organizations. Some Committee members referred to the definition of fraudulent practice currently used by United Nations Development Group in legal instruments for pass-through funding, noting that this was aligned with the definition used by the multilateral development banks and had been adopted by some United Nations system organizations. The Co-Chair noted that there was currently no common definition adopted by all United Nations system organizations, and that while the task force had used the United Nations Development Group definition as a starting point for discussion, not all organizations had agreed to that definition and the final agreed definition of fraud had evolved to a broader, higher level definition that would encompass the definition used by United Nations Development Group.

95. The representative of the Representatives of Internal Audit Services of the United Nations Organizations (UN-RIAS) provided a statement on behalf of UN-RIAS and the United Nations Representatives of Investigative Services (UN-RIS), noting that UN-RIAS and UN-RIS had two main reservations regarding the proposed definition of fraud, and welcoming the fact that one of those reservations, regarding the inclusion of the word "material" in the definition ("knowingly misrepresents or conceals a *material* fact"), had been fully addressed by the task force. The other reservation related to the existence of the current United Nations Development Group definition and the potential for confusion when negotiating agreements if another definition existed alongside the United Nations Development Group definition. The Co-Chair of the Finance and Budget Network clarified that, following the endorsement by CEB of the common definitions for the United Nations system adopted by the task force, the definition used by the United Nations Development Group would eventually be replaced by the former. He further emphasized that the agreed common definitions of fraud were not inconsistent with those of the multilateral development banks or the United Nations Development Group pass-through agreement definitions, since they were broader and at a higher level, and incorporated the provisions of both the multilateral development banks and the United Nations Development Group definitions.

96. It was broadly agreed that Committee members did not have objections to the wording of the definitions, recognizing that the task force members had negotiated the definitions very thoroughly before reaching agreement on inclusive, high-level definitions. However, some members expressed a need for clarification as to the way that the new common definitions would be operationalized in each

organization, suggesting that perhaps more time should be taken for internal consultations within each organization. In the ensuing discussion the Committee Vice-Chair recalled paragraph 6 of document CEB/2017/HLCM/11, in which the task force had agreed that the proposed common definitions would provide a consistent and harmonized framework, within which organizations would have the autonomy and flexibility to further elaborate and define their implementation approaches and other operational details in their respective regulatory frameworks, legal instruments and policies, as appropriate, to meet their specific requirements and within the time frames appropriate to the circumstances of each organization. It was also recalled that there was great interest in these common United Nations system definitions from Member States, not only from the General Assembly but also within other governing bodies, and that addressing the mandate from the Assembly was a priority for the Secretary-General and CEB.

97. It was noted by UN-RIAS and Committee members that the next phase of work of the task force was very important and that, in accordance with its terms of reference, the task force would continue working in 2017 to develop common definitions for vendors, implementing partners and grant recipients. The task force would also explore the possibility of agreeing on common internal control parameters and criteria to be applied to arrangements with implementing partners and recipients of grants, and a menu of best practice principles. After completion of these activities, the next stage would be to look at developing an information-sharing platform for tracking and managing implementing partners, including an assessment as to what extent existing tools were already being used by organizations and which tools might be available.

98. **The High-Level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Recalled that the mandate to establish a single agreed definition across the United Nations system of what constituted fraud, as well as cases of presumptive fraud, had been reiterated several times by the General Assembly, and most recently in the context of its review of the sixth progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat in March 2017;**

(b) **Adopted the common definition of fraud for the United Nations system as:**

> **"Any act or omission whereby an individual or entity knowingly misrepresents or conceals a fact (a) in order to obtain an undue benefit or advantage or avoid an obligation for himself, herself, itself or a third party, and/or (b) in such a way as to cause an individual or entity to act, or fail to act, to his, her or its detriment";**

(c) **Adopted the common definition of presumptive fraud for the United Nations system as:**

> **"Allegations that have been deemed to warrant an investigation and, if substantiated, would establish the existence of fraud resulting in loss of resources to the Organization";**

(d) **Noted that individual organizations would be expected to operationalize the agreed common definitions within their respective regulatory frameworks, legal instruments and policies, as appropriate, according to their specific requirements and within a time frame appropriate to the circumstances of each organization.**

Annex I

List of participants

Vice-Chair: Jan Beagle, Deputy Executive Director, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

Secretary: Remo Lalli, secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

Simona Petrova, Director, secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and Acting Secretary, United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

Organizations	*Name title and division*
United Nations	**Yukio Takasu** Under-Secretary-General, Department of Management
	Peter Drennan Under-Secretary-General, Department of Safety and Security, and Chair, Inter-Agency Security Management Network
	Catherine Pollard Under-Secretary-General, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
	Antigoni Axenidou Director, General Legal Division, and Representative of the Legal Network
	Jillann Farmer Director, Medical Service Division, and Chair, Medical Directors Working Group
	Cecilia Elizalde Director, Documentation Division, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
	Christophe Monier Project Lead, Global Service Delivery Model Project, by videoconference
	Amr Nour Director, Regional Commissions New York Office
International Labour Organization	**Greg Vines** Deputy Director General
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	**Fernanda Guerrieri** Assistant Director General, Corporate Services Department
	Sylvain St. Pierre Head, Shared Service Centre, Budapest
	Helene Jasinski Deputy Chief, Budapest

Organizations	*Name title and division*
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	**Getachew Engida** Deputy Director General
	Nutan Wozencroft Chief Financial Officer, Bureau of Financial Management
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	**Helen Frary** Senior Adviser, Change Management
International Civil Aviation Organization	**Vincent Smith** Director, Bureau of Administration and Services
World Health Organization	**Hans Troedsson** Assistant Director General
	Roberto Balsamo Management Officer
International Organization for Migration	**Laura Thompson** Deputy Director General
	Carlos Oliver Cruz Special Assistant to the Deputy Director General
	Marco Boasso Director, Global Administrative Centre, Manila
International Telecommunication Union	**Anders Norsker** Chief, Information Services, and Representative of Information and Communications Technology Network
World Meteorological Organization	**Angiolo Rolli** Director, Resource Management Department
International Maritime Organization	**Aubrey Botsford** Acting Director, Administrative Division
World Intellectual Property Organization	**Ambi Sundaram** Assistant Director General, Administration and Management
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	**Fatou Haidara** Managing Director, Policy and Programme Support, and Director ad interim, Department of Human Resources Management
	Konstantin Ivanov Officer-in-Charge, Department of Operational Support Services
World Tourism Organization	**José G. Blanch** Director, Administration Division
International Atomic Energy Agency	**Mary Alice Hayward** Deputy Director General and Head, Department of Management
	Neris Baez Garcia De Mazzora Chair, Procurement Network, and Director, Office of Procurement Services, Department of Management

Organizations	*Name title and division*
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	**Adnan Issa** Chief, Resource Management Service
United Nations Development Programme	**Jens Wandel** Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Management Services
	Darshak Shah Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Director
	Martha Helena López Director, Office of Human Resources
United Nations Environment Programme	**Theresa Panuccio** Director, Office for Operations and Corporate Services
Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees	**Kelly Clements** Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees
	Shoko Shimozawa Head, Global Service Centre
United Nations Children's Fund	**Eva Mennel** Director, Division of Human Resources
	Mark Beatty Director, Global Shared Services Centre
	Lori Issa Executive Manager, Office of the Executive Director
	Madhavi Ashok Senior Adviser, United Nations Partnerships
	Luis Soares Chief, Service Quality Management
United Nations Population Fund	**Laura Londén** Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director (Management)
World Food Programme	**Calum Gardner** Director, Budget Services
	Lidia Tutarinova Inter-agency Coordinator to the Assistant Executive Director
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	**Dennis Thatchaichawalit** Director, Division of Management
	Polinikis Sophocleous Chief, Financial Resources Management Service
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	**Andrew Cox** Director, Management and Operations Division

Organizations	*Name title and division*
United Nations Office for Project Services	**Vitaly Vanshelboim** Deputy Executive Director
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	**Moez Doraid** Director, Management and Administration
International Trade Centre	**Gerry Lynch** Director, Division of Programme Support
World Bank	**Björn Gillsäter** Manager, World Bank Group, New York Office
International Monetary Fund	**Chris Hemus** Director, Corporate Services and Facilities Department
Other representatives:	
United Nations System Staff College	**Claire Messina** Deputy Director, Programme Management and Business Development
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	**Patrick Grenard** Director, Administration
International Civil Service Commission	**Wolfgang Stoeckl** Vice-Chair
High-level Committee on Programmes	**Kayoko Gotoh** Secretary
Representatives of Internal Audit Services of the United Nations Organizations	**Anthony Watson** Chief Internal Auditor, International Labour Organization
United Nations Development Group	**John Hendra** Co-Chair, United Nations Development Group Working Group on Leadership, by videoconference
	Sarmad Khan Team Leader and Policy Adviser, Leadership Development, by videoconference
United Nations Development Group/ Development Operations Coordination Office	**Anders Voigt** Business Operations Adviser
Federation of International Civil Servants' Association	**Peter Kakuska** Member, Executive Committee
	Imed Zabaar Former Member, Executive Committee

Annex II

Checklist of documents

Item	*Title*	*Summary sheet*	*Document symbol*
	Provisional agenda	n.a.	CEB/2017/HLCM/1/Rev.3
	Provisional programme of work		CEB/2017/HLCM/1/Add.1/Rev.1
A.	**High-level Committee on Management strategic plan 2017-2020**	Yes	CEB/2016/HLCM/15
	Results framework strategic plan 2017-2020		CEB/2016/HLCM/15/Add.1/Rev.1
	Letter from the Deputy Secretary-General on the review of the United Nations development system		CEB/2017/HLCM/INF.1
B.	**Outline of the session**	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/2
	Update on global service delivery solutions in the United Nations system		CEB/2017/HLCM/3
	Use of key performance indicators for performance of service centres		CEB/2017/HLCM/3/Add.1
	Progress with global service delivery solutions in the United Nations system		CEB/2015/HLCM/11
	The role of service centres in redesigning administrative service delivery		JIU/REP/2016/11
	Consultant report with feasibility study and business case for joint facility classification and reference checking	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/4
C.	**Briefing note on the cross-functional task force on duty of care**	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/6
	Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security on the current security environment for United Nations personnel	Yes	Summary sheet only
	Final report of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network at its twenty-fifth session		n.a.
	United Nations system leadership framework	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/7
	Briefing note by the Human Resources Network on the outcome of the International Civil Service Commission at its eighty-fourth session	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/8
	Human Resources Network strategic workplan 2017-2020		CEB/2017/HLCM/9
D	**Working group on document standards: recommendations to the High-level Committee on Management for the adoption of the United Nations semantic interoperability framework**	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/10/Rev.1

Item	*Title*	*Summary sheet*	*Document symbol*
	Working group on document standards: guidelines for the markup of United Nations normative and parliamentary documents (AKN4UN)		CEB/2017/HLCM/10/Annex 2
	Working group on document standards: a framework for the description of United Nations system documents and their relationships with each other and the entities they portray		CEB/2017/HLCM/10/Annex 3
	Common definitions of fraud and presumptive fraud	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/11
	A new environment for the United Nations	Yes	Summary sheet only